

REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the final Office Action dated July 7, 2010. Applicants note with appreciation the indication of claim 8 as allowable subject matter and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 101 by the Office.

Present Status of the Application

Claims 1, 3-7, and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being assertedly unpatentable over Shiragaki (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0162045) in view of Pierson Jr. (U.S. Patent No. 6,633,566).

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being assertedly unpatentable over Shiragaki in view of Pierson Jr. and further in view of Conoscenti et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,627,836; hereinafter "Conoscenti").

Claim 8 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

To expedite the prosecution process, Applicants have amended claim 1 by incorporating all the limitations of claim 8. Claim 8 has been canceled accordingly. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been entered by way of amendment. Upon entry of the above amendment, Applicants respectfully submit that all the pending claims 1-7 and 9 are in proper condition for allowance. Allowance of all the pending claims is earnestly requested.

In view of the amendment to claim 1, the rejections to claim 1-7 and 9 are now moot.

CONCLUSION

For at least the foregoing reasons and amendment, it is believed that all the pending claims 1-7 and 9 of the present application patently define over the cited art and are in proper condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would expedite the examination of the above-identified patent application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,
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